

AMENDMENT TO SPECIFICATION

Please amend paragraphs [0038], [0040] and [0041] as follows (paragraph numbers are referenced to the published application 20010037298 of the present application) :

A1 [0038] With reference to the drawings, in FIG. 1, rental vehicle 1 contains monitoring sensors 30 and 31 operatively linked to the vehicle odometer 32 and fuel tank float 33, referenced to fuel level analysis element 34, and which sensors are respectively linked to the device 14 for use in transmission of monitored and stored information to a central data base and for resetting of digital registers to initial usage conditions of mileage and extent of fuel capacity. During rental use, the sensors, as programmed, monitor odometer readings, mileage and fuel usage (as described above) and the data is entered and stored in the memory associated with transmitter/receiver 14, embodying timing and sensing means 15 to determine and store periods of time in which the vehicle is located in said lot to determine efficiency in vehicle processing.

A2 [0040] In FIG. 4, rental vehicle 10 is shown situated in vehicle rental lot 100 in rental ready area A. The vehicle 10 includes a data entry keyboard 11 and screen 11a for direct entry by a customer of identification and rental information options, whereby the customer simply locates the vehicle and effects check-in directly within the vehicle. After data entry (the information typically required in filling out a rental agreement-optionally all such data may be contained in a preprogrammed card for simple swipe entry in a reader such as for frequent users), the customer swipes a credit card through reader 12 for

A2
activation of the rental process including activation of the vehicle starting key 13 or activation means (left in the vehicle but which cannot start the vehicle unless an interlock is activated). Device 14 transmits the customer-entered information, including credit card information, to a central billing and control data base. The device 14, further transmits pre-entered vehicle identification information (such as VIN 20 contained on a dashboard 21 for visual identification), for direct correlation with the customer entered information for use as a security key and for subsequent billing and vehicle inventory control. It is device 14 which further functions as a vehicle locator and tracker within lot 100 by means of communication with fixed position nodes 14a dispersed within the lot. The central data or data collection data base 40 and/or device 14 transmits a valid activation with vehicle and customer information to a check-out gate where identification is checked on a terminal to ensure that an authorized user is removing the vehicle from the vehicle lot. Device 14 transmits an approach message which triggers a printer at a check-out gate to print out a rental agreement for the driver with the previously entered information and selected options. It is possible to utilize separate devices 14 for the separate purposes of driver and vehicle identification and function monitoring, with the former device being removable for transfer to another vehicle once valid identification has been established, such as at a check-out gate.

[0041] When the vehicle is returned to lot 100 (or other computer linked lot) a personalized welcome back sign 200 (FIG. 3) is activated, device 14 transmits the memory stored information relating to fuel fill status (as well as mileage and other usage information) to the billing data base, which calculates the final bill, charges the

previously activated credit card charge, and prints out a receipt for the payment with itemized charges at the check in gate. The customer takes the receipt (or is handed the receipt by a concierge) and simply leaves the vehicle in drop-off section B of lot 100.

A2 Device 14 immediately transmits this location information to the central data base 40 for inventory control and processing for re-rental with device 14 maintaining location communication with the central data base during car washing (area C) and ready area D, etc. Device 14 is powered by the vehicle battery and maintains sufficient power for such constant location communication.
